REMARKS

35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 3, 12, 4, 5, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yonekawa (U.S. Pat. No. 6,781,144).

The Examiner asserts that Figure 6 of Yonekawa discloses a radiation image information reading apparatus, including a cassette loader 3, a reading unit 60, an erasure unit 64, a detector 45, an abnormal cassette storage unit (3 or 4, column 42), and a discharging mechanism 40. Element 28 is applied for disclosing a stimulable phosphor panel.

As shown in Figure 6 of Yonekawa, after the cassette 1 is inserted into the insertion inlet 3, the cassette 1 is recognized by a cassette detection sensor (not shown), and the cassette is moved laterally to the center of the insertion inlet 3 by a width-adjusting means 47 arranged on the insertion inlet 3. (See Yonekawa, col. 34, lines 43-48.)

The Examiner relies on col. 42 of Yonekawa to allegedly disclose the claimed discharging mechanism, which the Examiner asserts teaches to discharge a cassette that is detected as being abnormal. As noted in col. 42, lines 25-33, a cassette that has been conveyed inside the main body 2, may be ejected to the ejection outlet 4. The Examiner is, therefore, asserting that the ejection outlet 4 may form an abnormal cassette storage unit.

The exemplary embodiments of the present invention utilize a normal cassette storage unit and an abnormal cassette storage unit. Yonekawa does not disclose the combination of elements in claim 1, including this feature. Instead, the storage area 4 of Yonekawa stores both the normal and abnormal cassettes, which have been passed into the main body of the apparatus. Thus, claim 1 is amended to separately recite a normal cassette storage unit which stores a

cassette comprising a stimulable phosphor panel from which radiation image information has been read by the reading unit.

The single storage area 4 of Yonekawa does not disclose the recited normal cassette storage unit and abnormal cassette storage unit, such that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) should be withdrawn. Also, the insertion inlet 3 of Yonekawa does not disclose the claimed features because a cassette stored in the insertion inlet 3 does not include a stimulable phosphor panel *from which radiation image information has been read*. In contradistinction, the stimulable phosphor panel stored in the insertion inlet 3 has not yet had its radiation image information read. Applicant likewise submits that the rejection of dependent claims 2-10 should be withdrawn, at least due to these claims depending from claim 1.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

Claims 6-8, 10 and 11 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant adds new claims 13-16 to capture the allowable subject matter of the original claims. Claim 13 includes the features of claims 1 and 6. Claim 14, depends from claim 13, and includes the features of claim 7. Claim 15 includes the features of claims 1 and 8. Claim 16 includes the features of claims 1, 2 and 11.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.   Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.
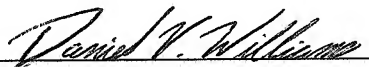
Respectfully submitted,

Daniel V. Williams
Registration No. 45,221

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE
23373
CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: May 12, 2006